

17 November 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, CIA

SUBJECT : Establishment of a series of "National Situation Reports"

REFERENCE : A Memorandum for the Director from Chief, ICAPS
3 October 1947

B Memorandum for the Assistant Director, ORE,
from the Executive Director, 8 October 1947

1. Reference A was prepared and submitted to the Director without reference to ORE for reasons connected with urgent requests from the National Security Council for intelligence estimates on certain areas. It was apparently the belief of ICAPS that present forms of reports produced in ORE would not be adequate for the purposes of these National Security Council papers. ORE is not, however, in complete agreement with this point of view, and offers the following comments and recommendations.

2. The recommendations in Reference A are based on a somewhat disputed concept of the origin of the Situation Report series. A detailed review of that development is therefore outlined below. Three, rather than two, lines of thought were involved, to wit:

- a. ORE projection of a new series to provide a resume of the basic or quasi-permanent factors in given situations, obviating the need for detailed discussion of such factors in the ORE series. The latter series would continue to be used to respond to special requests or to make special reports on important emergent trends perceived by ORE. Relying upon basic coverage in the Situation Report series, items in the ORE series could be confined to a concise and direct discussion of the immediate problem.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

- b. A request by ONI for a new series of descriptive studies of various national situations for the purpose of general orientation. This concept differed from that above in its emphasis upon a descriptive rather than an analytical approach and upon geographical and sociological factors.
- c. An ICAPS concept of a series addressed to readers below the IAB level and to be revised monthly, in effect a series of monthly current intelligence publications on a country by country basis expressly intended by ICAPS to replace the Weekly Summary.

The pertinent statement in the current approved ORE production program embodies the points insisted upon by ICAPS with respect to readership and monthly review, but includes also points made by ORE that the series should include summaries for readers at a higher level, that its content should be analysis of the basic factors in the situation rather than current intelligence, and that revision should be undertaken only as required.

3. The conflict of concept to which paragraph 2, Reference A, refers is not actually between the ORE and ONI concepts, as is suggested, but between them and the previous ideas of ICAPS. The Situation Report series, as now produced, is designed to accomplish primarily the original purpose of ORE and incidentally that of ONI.

4. Reference A now withdraws the former requirement of monthly revision in favor of no revision in any circumstances. The concept already approved and embodied in the ORE program provides for revision as required, but only then. Actually ORE contemplates completion of the Situation Report series along these lines and the eventual supersession of the series by the National Intelligence Surveys, the first section of which will be a "Brief" of approximately the same scale and content.

5. So far as the Situation Report series is concerned, the effect of the recommendations in Reference A requires no radical revision of the concept under which they are now being produced. There is, however, the suggestion of a change in name to "Brief Studies".

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

Although this was the original name proposed for the series by ONI, it is not properly descriptive of these reports in their present form. They are brief only in relation to a JANIS or an NIS, and the term is used in that relative sense.

6. The principal recommendation of Reference A is the establishment of a new series of six-page "National Situation Reports" in accordance with a proposed outline. This series would be used for both scheduled production and in response to specific requests. This proposal is not favorably regarded in general by ORE because the indicated coverage is already provided for either through the summaries appearing at the head of the reports in the Situation Report series or in the ORE series. Particular objections are:

- a. The main headings of the proposed outline are identical with those of the Situation Reports. The "National Situation Reports" would therefore be a briefer statement of the substance of the present Situation Reports. This, however, is exactly what the Situation Report summaries are designed to accomplish with greater flexibility of form and with the immediate availability of the report itself for further reference. The proposed "National Situation Reports" would amount to no more than separate publication of expanded summaries, and would result in a series of doubtful adequacy without compensatory advantages.
- b. The sub-headings in the outline are not regarded as adequate either as a check-list or as a guide.
- c. The title is regarded as misleading. If "National" refers to the functions of CIA, that is covered by the name of the agency on the outside of the report. If it refers to the subject matter, it would be inappropriate to a regional estimate or to one regarding a particular aspect of the national situation.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

- d. The present ORE series is sufficiently flexible to take care of all types of subject matter. The fact that the first National Security Council requests were for estimates of the current situation in certain countries does not preclude eventual requests for special estimates of either a broader or a more specific nature.


7. The need for a type of report suitable for use at Cabinet level can be met by minor alterations in the form of the summaries to the present ORE reports. This series, however, is regarded as the proper medium for unscheduled estimates and for responses to specific requests.

8. It is recommended that:

- a. Reference B be rescinded, and Reference A be reconsidered in the light of the above comments.
- b. ORE continue to use the ORE (Special Estimate) series for responses to specific requests and for unscheduled estimates of emergent situations.
- c. The Situation Report series be continued as at present, but the idea of periodic revision be dropped in favor of the further treatment of the subject matter of each report through the ORE series.
- d. No new series be established until there has been demonstrated a need for it.

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Assistant Director
Reports and Estimates

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